



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 28, 2007

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Three Native American Tribes Form Historic Economic Development Partnership
Tribal Coalition Opens California's First Tribally Owned Off-Reservation Hotel

Sacramento, Calif. – Three Native American Tribes made history today in California, officially opening the first hotel located off-reservation in California to be owned by a coalition of tribes. Three Fires, LLC, an economic development partnership of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, both located in Southern California, celebrated the grand opening today of the new Residence Inn by Marriott Sacramento at Capitol Park, site of the California Capitol.

The 15-story, 235-suite hotel, located across from the California State Capitol, is the first hotel in the state located off tribal lands and owned by multiple tribes. This new economic partnership is one of the first joint business ventures in the nation between tribal governments formed as an investment coalition. The three tribes are principal owners of the hotel, along with 15th & L Investors, LLC.

“This tribal partnership demonstrates how Native American tribes can leverage the success of their tribal government gaming operations to expand economic development beyond gaming, enhance self-sufficiency and, ultimately, further secure tribal sovereignty,” said Viejas Chairman Bobby L. Barrett.

Tribal leaders believe that Three Fires, LLC will serve as an economic model, benefiting other tribes interested in working together as one to strengthen efforts, reduce risk and diversify their collective and individual economic futures.

Gerald Danforth, Chairman of the Oneida Nation, said, "The hospitality industry has been successful for our Tribe. We must continue to move forward into economic partnerships such as Three Fires, to maximize our economic resources. Smart business practices result in success and I believe this project will be a tribute to smart business, hardworking employees and strong leadership."

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Each tribe in the partnership has shown leadership and innovation in pioneering Indian-owned and -developed businesses, from hotels, a retail shopping center and bank, to a bottled water company.

“Together we are building upon a tradition of trade and commerce that has been the basis for connecting native nations since time immemorial,” said San Manuel Chairman Henry Duro.

The same three tribes, plus the Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin, formed a similar coalition, named Four Fires, LLC, which opened a hotel in downtown Washington D.C. in 2005.

About Three Fires, LLC

Three Fires, LLC is an economic development coalition of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, and the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, both located in Southern California. The historic partnership arises from the success of tribal government gaming on reservations and the need to continually pursue a sound and established economic future. The governments of each tribe believe that forming a coalition of common interest will minimize the risk of one, while strengthening our purpose to seek out ventures that will return revenue to each member of our coalition.

Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin is a sovereign nation representing approximately 16,000 enrolled members. With a long-range vision spanning seven generations, the Oneida Nation has made a concerted effort to invest in economic ventures that continue to lead them towards economic self-sufficiency. Among the most successful economic ventures for the Oneida are the newly expanded 400-room Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, a chain of Mobil convenience stores and gas stations, a gaming operation located immediately across from Austin Straubel International Airport in Green Bay, Wis. and a recent joint venture with the NFL Green Bay Packers team and the historic Lambeau Field.

San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Since time immemorial, the San Manuel tribal community has endured change and hardship. Amidst these challenges the tribe continued to maintain its unique form of governance. Like other governments it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Today San Manuel tribal government oversees many governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment.

Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians

The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay traces their history back 10,000 years. Their reservation is located in the community of Alpine, 30 miles from the City of San Diego. A federally recognized tribe, the Viejas Band governs in accord with the band's customs and traditions. The tribe owns and operates the Viejas Casino; Viejas Entertainment & Production, a concert booking and promotion company; three radio stations and two recreational vehicle parks. In addition, the Viejas Band was one of the first American Indian bank owners, with the purchase of Borrego Springs Bank N.A.; and also owns the 25-acre, \$55 million-Viejas Outlet Center, boasting 60 retail outlet stores and restaurants. Viejas Enterprises employs nearly 2,400 people, purchases more than \$100 million locally in goods and services, and contributes millions of dollars annually to more than 450 charities and local neighboring community, school and civic programs.